

March 15, 2015

TO: Public Health Committee of the
Connecticut General Assembly

RE: S.B. 1088 – An Act concerning Services for Individuals with Intellectual Disability

I am a native of Connecticut whose brother, David Eisgrau, was a resident of Southbury Training School for most of his life. He passed away at age 51 from hepatitis, having been an STS resident from the time he was five years old. David had Down Syndrome, and was profoundly retarded. Caring for him at home became simply impossible. Throughout his life, my parents and I were regular visitors to STS, were close to the staff, and were intimately familiar with his treatment. The only real problem over all of those years occurred when he was relocated to a group home. The drop off in care was striking, and brought a cry for return to STS from the public as well as the press who were investigating the horrendous conditions. Eventually the state heeded that cry.

I understand and support the movement toward least restrictive, community-based care whenever possible. However, closing STS would be a classic example of “throwing out the baby with the bath water”. There must be an appropriate home for people with profound disabilities where they can be safe. STS provides that environment.

On numerous occasions, my family and I searched for a group home for David. We never found one where we could be confident that he would be adequately cared for and, above all safe.

I implore you to reconsider any movement to close STS. While I know the word “institution” connotes bad things, there are many wonderful institutions in this world as well, and Southbury is certainly one of them.

I only wish I could be with you in Hartford this week, but I am recovering from back surgery and cannot travel. If there is any additional information I can offer, or if I can help in any other way, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Respectfully,

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